

Colour Grading Workflow

VIDEOGRAPHY · DAVINCI RESOLVE

Two jobs in this order: correction, then look. Do them on every clip and your shots will match before you style anything.

1. PREPARE

- ☐ Set the project colour space and gamma to match your footage.
- ☐ Disable any LUT on the clip so you grade from the true log image.
- ☐ Colour-manage if your camera supports it; otherwise apply the conversion once.
- ☐ Watch a full scene at reduced resolution to spot mismatches.

2. CORRECT

- ☐ Set black and white points with the waveform, not your eyes.
- ☐ Neutralise colour on something white or grey in frame using the parade.
- ☐ Bring exposure into line so faces sit at the same level across shots.
- ☐ Only now touch saturation, gently.

3. MATCH

- ☐ Pick one hero shot per scene.
- ☐ Split-screen every other shot against the hero and match it.
- ☐ Check skin tones against the vectorscope skin-tone line.
- ☐ Match the background brightness, not just the face.

4. STYLE

- ☐ Apply the look on a group or timeline node, never on the clip node.
- ☐ Shadows slightly cool, highlights slightly warm, greens pulled back.
- ☐ Add grain and halation last, and at half the strength you first chose.
- ☐ Keep the look subtle enough that a still frame does not announce it.

5. CHECK

- ☐ Export a short test and watch it on a phone and a TV.
- ☐ Look for banding in skies and gradients.
- ☐ Confirm audio levels before the final render.

FIELD NOTE

Your eyes adapt within minutes. Step away for ten, then look again — the grade that felt bold will usually look heavy.